CHRISTIAN UNITY Newsletter

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UNITY CONSULTATIONS REPORT FINDINGS

At this writing, seven of eleven scheduled unity consultations have been held (see Newsletter, Vol. IV, No. 3). Five hundred ministers and professors have participated. Interest has been lively, participation keen. Where issues have been most delicate a real eagerness has been discovered for ongoing and diligent work.

Study Questions

Using a preparatory study document entitled *Issues In Unity*, the consultations have focussed on five main questions:

1. What are the important current developments in the ecumenical movement, how are they to be understood in terms of direction, what is their meaning in the long sweep of redemption-history?
2. What is the case for unity, what is the thrust behind it, how should this be articulated in contemporary theological language?
3. What is the unity Disciples hope for (cooperation? "spiritual"? organic?)? Does it have intellectual and theological integrity? Is it responsible toward the Church? What are the implications for our present structures, practices, relationships?
4. What procedures should be followed in conversing with other communions about forming a united church to ensure broadest participation and representative and responsible decisions? What basic principles should guide us in that kind of negotiation? What particular issues need our urgent study as we converse with the new United Church?
5. What is our mission beyond North America? What should be our relation to indigenous ancient churches, to union movements of younger churches, to our own mission churches? What basic principles and policies should underlie our involvements in these areas?

Affirmation of Faith?

It is too early to predict what conclusions will come out of the eleven consultations. Developments so far suggest that findings will vary from area to area, that some findings may come as a surprise to many of us, that some new and unexpected questions will be tossed up for later work.

One consultation affirmed that the Brotherhood should draft some kind of common affirmation of our faith. Another came out strongly opposed to such an action. Surprisingly, the former was in an area generally regarded as "conservative," while those opposed to such a common affirmation are in an area sometimes labeled "liberal." This has thrown up a new question, not whether and how we can state our faith, but what faith have we to articulate? If "no creed, but Christ," what "Christ"?

Mergers Favored

Concerning prospective mergers, and solidarity among Disciples, one consultation took pains to describe why and how it felt the present "breach" in Brotherhood life could be resolved, then went on to say that we should nonetheless move with greatest urgency toward union with another communion, even if it meant leaving a splinter of Disciples behind. Still another consultation, considering a live option for union, debated whether we can stay out of a union not entirely to our liking and still claim to have any mission for unity.

What Kind of Unity?

Until now the consultations have generally registered acceptance of recent theological definitions of unity as "given," but there has been sharp diversity over the kind of unity Disciples seek—whether "organic" or "spiritual." On this point, two consultations showed a marked discrepancy between positions approved in plenary session (for "spiritual" unity) and the majority viewpoint (for "organic" union) as indicated on questionnaires filled out by participants individually.

While there has been disagreement as to whether and in what way historic patterns of the church may be restored, until now the consultations reflect a trend away from a concept of the Church as restorable after precise historic patterns.

All consultations concerned on the matter have so far expressed some desire for a delegate type of convention as a help toward our own organizational life and a proper preparation for church merger. This without closing the door to mass conventions for study and inspiration.

When the eleven consultations are ended, the findings from each, with agreements, disagreements and recommendations, together with data from the questionnaires, will be correlated and analyzed. It is expected that some kind of report, including proposals for further action, will be prepared for broad consideration and action.

Sponsors

The consultations are being sponsored by the United Society's Divisions of World Mission and Home Missions and the Council on Christian Unity together with the host colleges, seminaries and regional missionary societies:

Graduate Seminary at Phillips University, Enid, Okla.
Disciples Divinity House, Chicago, Illinois
Lynchburg College, Lynchburg, Virginia
Christian Theological Seminary, Indianapolis, Indiana
Divinity School, Drake University, Des Moines, Iowa
Northwest Christian College, Eugene, Oregon
Brite College of the Bible, Texas Christian University, Fort Worth, Texas
The College of the Bible, Lexington, Kentucky
Christian Missionary Society, Southern California
All Canada Committee, Toronto, Canada
Christian Churches of Northern California

ECUMENICAL CALENDAR—1959

GENERAL EVENTS

March 31-April 5 Arnoldshain, Germany
WCC, Division of Studies, Commission on "The Lordship of Christ over the Church and the World."

April 3-8 Heidelberg
WCC, Faith and Order, Theological Commission on Worship.

April 20-23 Evanston, Illinois
Church Peace Mission, Third National Conference on "The Word of God in the Nuclear Age."

April 22-24 Buck Hill Falls
US Conference for the WCC.

May 14-26 Malaya
East Asia Christian Council Assembly.

May 22-24 USA
WCC, Faith and Order, Theological Commission on Worship.

June 3-4 Seattle, Washington
NCCC in the USA, General Board.

July 16-18 Paris
IMC, Theological Education Fund Committee.

July 20-August 1 Tutzing, Germany
WCC, Faith and Order, Theological Commission on Christ and the Church.

July 22-25 Tutzing, Germany
WCC, Faith and Order, Study Commission on Institutionalism.

July 25-August 2 Anatolia College, Thessaloniki
International Conference on Rapid Social Change.

August 3-14 Villach, Austria
WCC, Faith and Order, Working Committee (and reorganized committees for Assembly preparation).

August 4-14 Spittal, Austria
WCC, Departmental, Division, and 3rd Assembly planning meetings.

August 15-18 Athens
WCC, Faith and Order, Orthodox Consultation.

August 17-18 Athens
WCC, Executive Committee.

August 18-29 Rhodes
WCC, Central Committee.

September 16-25 Mainair
YMCA, "Growing Up in Today's Society," a consultation on living ethics for youth in the welfare state.

September 29-October 1 Geneva
UBS/WCC/IMC Cooperating Committee on the Place and Use of the Bible.

October 20-22 Louisville, Kentucky
NCCC in the USA, National Convocation on the Church in Town and Country, Department of Town and Country Church.

December 2-3 Detroit, Michigan
NCCC in the USA, General Board.

December 8 New York
Friends of the World Council of Churches, INC., Annual Meeting.

ECUMENICAL INSTITUTE PROGRAM
BOSSEY, SWITZERLAND

Summer Courses

Applications are welcome for the following summer courses at the Institute:

June 15-28: Course on Bible Study
"Living with the Bible"

Primarily for laymen and women who are looking for a new approach to the Bible and who want to learn how to read the Bible with a view to better understanding the problems of daily life. Will also study some of the acute problems of our time from a Biblical point of view. Apply through Dr. Roswell Barnest, Exec. Sec., WCC, 156 Fifth Ave., New York 10 by March 15.

July 1-15: Course for Missionaries and Pastors
"The Mission of the Church in Conditions of Rapid Social Change"

Will deal with rapid social change, especially in Asia and Africa, with its implications for the mission of the Church. Leaders will be experts who have been conducting rapid social change studies in various parts of the world for the Department of Church and Society of the WCC during the past three years. Apply through Dr. Roswell Barnes, Exec. Sec., WCC, 156 Fifth Ave., New York 10 by March 15.

July 20-31: Course for Laymen
"Christian Unity and Commitment in the World"

Intended for lay people between the ages of 25 and 45, engaged in secular professions (such as teachers, doctors, social workers, employees, house-wives, etc.). Will deal with the involvement of Christians in various situations of the modern world (in Africa, Eastern and Western Europe, Asia, etc.) and its relation to the unity, life and witness of the Church as a whole. Bible study will be based on the theme of the next Assembly of the WCC: "Jesus Christ, the Light of the World." Apply through Dr. Roswell Barnes, Exec. Sec., WCC, 156 Fifth Ave., New York 10, by March 31.

August 3-24: Course for Theological Students
"Church, Christian Culture and Mission"

Organized in cooperation with the officers of the World's Student Christian Federation and led jointly by the Rev. Charles Long and Pastor Valdo Galland, of the WSCF, and Dr. N. Nissiotis, Assistant Director of the Institute. The study of the main theme will imply first a study of the Church in relation with its mission, and secondly a study of the social structure of modern (secularized) Christian culture. A few non-theologians will be welcome. Apply through Rev. R. Heaton, NCCC, 297 Fourth Ave., New York 10, by April 1.

HOW ECUMENICAL IS OUR CHURCH?

(Continued from Page 4)

Yes No

22. Do we study to find ways of solving our own problems of relationships with other churches and the community? — —
23. Do we continually seek new ways of growing in oneness with other churches? — —

In Its Fellowship?

24. De we have exchange visits with neighboring churches for worship, special services and social events? — —
25. Do we share traditions, beliefs and customs with other communions through joint studies, films, etc.? — —
26. Do we participate in the fellowship and common endeavors of our local council of churches? — —
27. Do our youth, men and women participate in their respective local councils? — —
28. Do we undertake community work projects? — —
29. Do we participate in city-wide inter-denominational fellowship meetings? — —
30. Are we doing all we can to develop closer fellowship and mutual aid with neighboring churches? — —
31. Do we seek to develop a community-wide sense of common membership in the Church Universal? — —

In Its Service?

32. Have we surveyed the needs of our community in order to determine how we can better minister to it? — —
33. Do we undertake special service projects such as:
    a) collecting clothing and relief goods to send overseas? — —
    b) providing homes and work for refugees? — —
34. Do we serve the community with our facilities? — —
35. Do we give adequate financial support to:
    a) our local council of churches? — —
    b) the National Council of Churches? — —
    c) the World Council of Churches? — —
36. Do we participate in the Week of Compassion? — —
37. Do we give our youth opportunity to know about and share in ecumenical work camps? — —

Yes No

38. Do we assist neighboring churches whenever and in whatever ways possible? — —
39. Do we show hospitality to foreign students in our community? — —
40. Are we helping to prepare youth for leadership in the Church Universal? — —

In Its Organization?

41. Do we have a person or committee with particular competence which has responsibility for ecumenical concerns? — —
42. Do we have someone who has liaison responsibility for our ecumenical involvement (pastor, committee chairman, other)? — —
43. Is our responsible liaison a member of the Council on Christian Unity and does he receive its materials? — —
44. Do we have an effective council or federation of churches in our community? — —
45. Is provision made for our congregation to receive reports from our representatives to the:
    a) Council of Churches? — —
    b) Council of Churchwomen? — —
    c) Council of Churchmen? — —
    d) Christian Youth Council? — —

In Its Basic Attitudes?

46. Do we regard our mission work as in and for the whole Church in the whole world? — —
47. Do we recognize membership in our congregation as membership in the Church Universal? — —
48. Do new members sense that they become part of the Church Universal in becoming members of our congregation? — —
49. Do we recognize Christians in other Protestant communions as members of the Church Universal and accept them as such in our fellowship? — —
50. Do we eagerly include in our fellowship those claimed by Christ regardless of race, nationality and social, educational or economic status? — —
51. Do we have an ecumenical attitude and concern in the total life of our congregation? — —

(Off Prints of this Check Sheet available at 25c per dozen)

CHRISTIAN UNITY ESSAY CONTEST EXTENDED

The deadline for entries in the seminary division of the 1958-59 Year of Emphasis Essay Contest has been extended from April 1, 1959 to May 1, 1959.

The purpose of this division of the contest is to encourage seminary students to engage in some serious study of the current issues and problems regarding Christian unity.

Awards of $100, $75, and $50 will be given to the writers of the three best essays, and additional awards of 6 ecumenical books will be made to all entries which give evidence of serious work.

Copies of the contest rules are available from faculty representatives at the various seminaries or from the Council on Christian Unity, 222 So. Downey, Indianapolis 7, Indiana.

Christian Unity Newsletter: Issued quarterly to members and friends of the Council by the Council on Christian Unity (an association of Disciples of Christ for the promotion of Christian unity, for ecumenical fellowship and service), 222 So. Downey Ave., Indianapolis 7, Indiana, U.S.A. Robert Tobias and Robert Heckard, editors.

HOW ECUMENICAL IS OUR CHURCH?

(The 1958-59 Year of Emphasis is fast drawing to a close. Before ending this year of emphasis on Christian unity, each local minister and congregation may wish to check-up on its own program of Christian unity to determine how far it has come and what it should now be doing in order to manifest the oneness of all Christians within its own local community. The following check-sheet should help the local church to see how ecumenical it really is.)

In Its Awareness?

	Yes	No
1. Does our congregation receive regular information (through church bulletins, news announcements, sermons, classes and study groups)		
a) about the situation of Christians around the world?	—	—
b) about current ecumenical issues and problems?	—	—
c) about current endeavors for Christian unity?	—	—
d) about the involvement of Disciples and the ecumenical movement?	—	—
e) about significant developments in the life of other churches in other lands?	—	—
2. Has our congregation been informed (through speakers, films, flyers and literature) about the organization and work of		
a) the National Council of Churches?	—	—
b) the World Council of Churches?	—	—
c) the Council on Christian Unity?	—	—
d) our own local council of churches?	—	—
3. Does our congregation know how it is related organizationally to		
a) the National Council of Churches?	—	—
b) the World Council of Churches?	—	—
c) the Council on Christian Unity?	—	—
d) our own local council of churches?	—	—
4. Does our congregation know what other communions are represented in our community?	—	—

In Its Worship?

5. Do we use in our regular worship services		
a) prayers and orders of worship from various traditions?	—	—
b) hymns and special music from various traditions?	—	—
6. Does our minister preach sermons on		
a) the oneness of the Church?	—	—
b) issues and problems in Christian unity?	—	—
c) great concerns of the whole Church?	—	—
d) the life and work of churches in other parts of the world?	—	—
7. Do we use ecumenical symbols and art in our church architecture and decoration?	—	—
8. Do we help plan and participate in united services on special occasions?	—	—
9. Do we have exchanges of preachers with other denominations?	—	—
10. Do we participate in the observance of special days?		
a) World-Wide Communion Sunday?	—	—
b) World Order Sunday?	—	—
c) Reformation Sunday?	—	—
d) Week of Prayer for Christian unity?	—	—
e) Race Relations Sunday?	—	—
f) World Mission Sunday?	—	—
g) Pentecost Sunday?	—	—
11. Do we in our prayer life lift to the throne of Grace the sufferings and joys of all the Church and of all men?	—	—
12. Do we as a worshipping congregation penitently confess and seek pardon for our share in the sin of division and intercede regularly for the unity of the Church?	—	—

In Its Study?

13. Do all our members have opportunity to study ecumenical issues in some group?	—	—
Regular Sunday church school classes?	—	—
Elective study courses for leaders' training?	—	—
Fellowship meetings and retreats of youth, men, women?	—	—
Summer conferences (adult, family, youth; Disciple and inter-donominational?	—	—
City or area-wide inter-denominational groups of selected church officers and laity?	—	—
Special groups called together specifically for for ecumenical studies?	—	—
14. Do we participate in the ecumenical study program of		
a) the Council on Christian Unity?	—	—
b) the National and World Councils of Churches?	—	—
c) our own local council of churches?	—	—
15. Do we study the beliefs and practices of churches other than our own?	—	—
16. Does our library include basic books and materials on Christian unity?	—	—
17. Do we study the current problems of the church and the world?	—	—
18. Have we (in classes, in fellowship groups, in sermons, or in special study groups) re-considered the origin, "plea," and mission of our Brotherhood in the light of the present ecumenical situation?	—	—
19. Do we stimulate the members of our congregation to initiate inter-church or inter-denominational study groups?	—	—
20. Do we develop ecumenically-minded leaders for both our own church and for inter-denominational groups?	—	—
21. Do we analyze our own organization, program and life to see if we are adequately manifesting the oneness of the Church Universal?	—	—

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ECUMENICAL CALENDAR—1959

Conferences

The Institute will also serve as host for the following professional conferences:

March 20-24: Conference for Philosophers

During the recent years, three Conferences for Philosophers and Theologians have taken place at Bossey. All of them were concerned with the relationship between philosophy and theology, approaching this theme from various angles. The theme of this proposed conference is: "What is meant by reality?"

March 31-April 4: Study Conference on Problems of East European Culture and Church Life

In view of the closer contacts with Russian Christians which may take place in the future, this conference seeks to gather together people from all parts of the world in order to introduce them to the history of East European, especially Russian, Church and culture.

April 7-11: Conference organized by the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs

April 19-26: Orthodox Seminar

This seminar was organized during the past few years by a group of Orthodox and other professors of Western Europe. As usual, the seminar will consist of the one week of study at Bossey, followed by the Holy Week celebrated according to the Orthodox rite, probably in Paris.

May 6-13: Conference of Architects

Leading architects from all parts of the world will meet to exchange ideas and discuss questions of modern church construction in relation to the needs of the Church in our time. Also, a number of modern church buildings in Switzerland and France will be visited.

May 20-26: Conference of Work Camp Leaders

Orientation and training of leaders for the WCC's summer work camps.

May 29-31: Consultation for Politicians and Theologians

Will deal with the assumptions by which political decisions are reached in the international field. Participants will include political leaders in Europe with some responsibility for foreign policy of their country and a selected group of theologians.

August 28-September 1: Conference of Church Historians

In September 1956 a consultation was held at Bossey gathering together a group of church historians ready to examine from an ecumenical point of view several aspects of the teaching of their discipline in various parts of the world. Since then, five papers have been prepared which will be used as a basis for discussion in this larger conference.

September 1-5: Conference on the Laity in Historical Perspective

Organized by the Department on the Laity of the WCC.

September 7-12: Consultation on the Meaning of Secular

This consultation is organized by the Institute in collaboration with the University Teachers' Committee of the World's Student Christian Federation. Its purpose will be to discuss and evaluate the secular as a phenomenon of both the life and thought of modern times, as it pervades the various disciplines and areas of action in which we work.

September 21-26: Swiss Week of Pastoral Theology

Organized by a group of pastors of French speaking Switzerland.

Graduate School of Ecumenical Studies

The 8th Session of the Graduate School of Ecumenical Studies, sponsored by the World Council of Churches, will be held from October 1, 1959 to February 15, 1960. The theme of this year's study will be: "The Ministry and the Ministries of the Church." The theme will be dealt with on a Biblical basis as well as from the standpoints of the various confessional churches. Also to be considered are the questions of the place and responsibility of lay people in their churches, and an adequate training of the lay people for their ministry.

Besides a series of lectures about the history of the ecumenical Movement and an introduction to the whole work of the World Council of Churches, in lectures and seminars, lectures on the sects will also be given.

DISCIPLES ECUMENICAL MEETINGS

Study Commission

Commission on Biblical Theology, *Prof. William Reed, Chairman.*
April 10-11 at The College of the Bible, Lexington, Kentucky.

Commission on Rapid Social Change, *Prof. Walter Sikes, Chairman.*
Probably October in Indianapolis.

Unity Consultations

March 30-April 1: Asilomar, California.
For Northern California and Northwest Nevada—Mr. Charles W. Severns, convenor.

April 7-10: The College of the Bible, Lexington, Kentucky.
For Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, Georgia, West Virginia, Southern Ohio—President Riley B. Montgomery, convenor.

April 14-15: Northwest Christian College, Eugene, Oregon.
For Washington, Oregon, Montana, Idaho, Utah—President Ross J. Griffeth, convenor.

Council on Christian Unity

Executive Committee Meeting: March 24 at Missions Building.

Annual Meeting: Saturday noon luncheon, August 29 at Denver.

Board of Directors: Sunday breakfast, August 30, at Denver.

NEW UNITY PUBLICATIONS

Ecumenical Studies Guide for Local Churches, *by Robert Heckard and Robert Tobias, Council on Christian Unity, 1959, 72 pp., 50c; or $4.50 per 10 copies.*

A handbook on how to develop an on-going ecumenical study program in the local church. Part I deals with setting up an ecumenical study commission to do depth studies on current issues and problems of unity. Part II contains suggestions for ecumenical study by the functional committees, fellowship groups and special courses. Part III consists of suggestions for ecumenical education in the whole church and in the community. The appendices provide supplementary data concerning the larger world context of which local church studies are a part.

An annual *Supplement* will provide up-to-date material on the suggested core study for that year. Supplement No. 1, containing the specific materials for this year's study on "The Nature of the Unity We Seek," is included in the *Studies Guide.*

Ecumenical Studies Series, Vol. IV, No. 2, CCU, March 1959.

This issue of the *Studies Series* carries the *Ecumenical Studies Guide for Local Churches.* Members of the Council receive copies free of charge.

Christian Unity—Mission Begun (A Progress Report)

An 80 frame filmstrip in color with recorded narration and music. Showing time 16 min. Produced by the Council on Christian Unity in consultation with the Audio Visual Services of the United Christian Missionary Society. Price: sale $10.00; rental $2.50. Order from the Religious Film Library, 222 So. Downey Ave., Indianaoplis 7, Indiana; or Beaumont & Pine Blvd., St. Louis 3, Mo.

Surveys the progress in Christian unity since 1948. Describes the major unity developments as seen in: world fellowship, world service, missions, ecumenical study, mergers and union movements, ecumenical organizations, and local churches. Designed to give the layman a greater sense of the given oneness of the Church and a deeper understanding of how his own local church is involved in the manifestation of that oneness.

AROUND THE WORLD

EUROPE

For the first time on record an overwhelming majority of the Protestant and Orthodox churches of Europe have decided to establish methods of continuing cooperation.

At the close of a European Church Conference held in Denmark during January, 125 official delegates and participants from national Christian councils and cooperative bodies in 22 countries approved plans for a provisional committee to draft a program of study and action. The planning group will work with a larger consultative group drawn from both sides of the iron curtain.

The general theme of the meeting, which brought together non-member as well as member churches of the World Council, was "European Christianity in Today's Secularized World." A feature of the meeting was the active attendance of strong delegations from a number of Eastern European churches and countries: Delegates from the Russian Orthodox Church, the Lutheran Church in Estonia, the Polish Orthodox Church, four churches in Czechoslovakia, and churchmen from East Germany (DDR), Yugoslavia and Hungary; also representatives of the ecumencial councils of Hungary and Czechoslocakia. (EPS)

FINLAND

A series of Lutheran-Orthodox conferences, arranged by the Lay Training Institute of the Church of Finland and the Ecumenical Council of Finland will be held in Finland in May. The largest of the conferences will study the problem of church unity from both the Orthodox and Lutheran standpoints. Staff members of the Ecumenical Institute of the World Council will attend. (EPS)

AUSTRIA

A National Council of Churches in Austria was formed on December 12, 1958. Included in the new federation are the Lutheran Church of the Augsburgian Confession, the Evangelical Reformed Church (Heidelberg Confession), the Old Catholic Church and the Methodist Church.

Austrian Baptists will send observers to the council and the Orthodox Church will take part in a study commission which has been in existence for twelve years. The new organization will seek to become "associated" with the World Council of Churches. (EPS)

FRANCE, ITALY

In an experiment partly inspired by the international "twin city" schemes between towns of similar size in two different countries, a parish in Lyon, France, has adopted one in Florence, Italy. The two parishes correspond with each other and pray regularly for each other's undertakings.

Plans for the future include regular exchange of news, linkage of families by correspondence, hospitality for visitors in homes, delegations from church to church and exchange visits on vacations. (EPS)

Such endeavors as this help to make the ecumenical movement real in spite of language, doctrinal and cultural differences.

NEW ZEALAND

Measures designed to be the first step toward a merger with other New Zealand churches have been approved by the General Synod of the Anglican Church of New Zealand.

The Anglican Synod will now enter into "exploratory conversations" with a joint standing committee on union formed in November 1957, by Methodists, Presbyterians, Congregationalists and the Associated Churches of Christ. The proposal is similar to that adopted last November by the Church of the Province of Canada (Anglican) in regard to unity with the United Church of Canada. (EPS)

JAVA

The churches in Central Java will form a Central Java Ecumenical Council next July. The step is seen as transitional towards a possible future United Church of Java. In Central Java the churches have a common language and a common task in a predominantly Moslem area.

CYPRUS

Last month two delegates of the World Council paid a fraternal visit to the Church of Cyprus.

During their four-day visit they were received by the bishops of the Church of Cyprus, visited several parishes and church institutions and attended an ordination service. They were impressed by the loyalty of the people to the church and their strong desire for the return of Archbishop Makarios.